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For immediate release

## **Yannick Nézet-Séguin recipient of the 2010 NAC Award**

**Montréal (Canada)** — Canada's National Arts Centre announced today it is awarding the prestigious 2010 National Arts Centre Award to conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin, one of the fastest-rising stars on the international classical music scene. Acclaimed by musicians, audiences and critics alike for his musicality, dedication and charisma, he is in great demand as a symphonic and operatic conductor and has appeared with leading orchestras around the world.

The National Arts Centre Award, given out annually as part of the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards, recognizes work of an extraordinary nature and significance in the performing arts by an individual artist and/or company in the past performance year. Mr. Nézet-Séguin will be honoured on May 1 during the awards gala at the National Arts Centre.

"Yannick Nézet-Séguin has been generating excitement all over the world during the last year," said Peter Herrndorf, the National Arts Centre's President and CEO. "From New York City to Rotterdam, seasoned music lovers, musicians and critics have taken notice of what we, in this country, have known for some time: Yannick Nézet-Séguin is one of the classical music world's most accomplished artists."

Born in Montreal in 1975, Maestro Nézet-Séguin studied at the Conservatoire de musique du Québec à Montréal and took master classes with several eminent conductors, notably the great Italian maestro Carlo Maria Giulini.

Artistic Director and Principal Conductor since 2000 of the Orchestre Métropolitain du Grand Montréal, he has dramatically raised the orchestra's standards and popularity and infused the musicians with his passion for music of many different styles. In 2008 he was appointed Music Director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

He has worked with major orchestras across Canada and is a sought-after guest conductor of leading ensembles in the USA and Europe, among them Staatskapelle Dresden, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Philadelphia Orchestra and Boston Symphony. Recent highlights include the Rotterdam Philharmonic's highly successful Far East tour and Maestro Nézet-Séguin's Salzburg Festival debut (2008), and his debuts at the BBC Proms and New York's Mostly Mozart Festival (2009) and with the Vienna Philharmonic (2010). Upcoming engagements include his debut with the Berliner Philharmoniker and his first performances of Mahler's Eighth Symphony with the combined forces of the NAC Orchestra and the Orchestre Métropolitain.

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His varied operatic work includes productions for the Canadian Opera Company, Opéra de Montréal, and Nederlands Opera. He made his acclaimed Metropolitan Opera debut in 2009 and will return regularly. Debuts for La Scala, Milan, and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden will take place in 2010–11 and 2011–12 respectively.

His first three Rotterdam Philharmonic recordings for EMI/Virgin have been very well received, and his extensive ATMA Classique discography with the Orchestre Métropolitain includes several award-winning recordings.

Awards and honours include Royal Philharmonic Society Young Artist of the Year (2009); Canada Council for the Arts Virginia Parker Award (2000); several Prix Opus from the Conseil québécois de la musique.

Previous winners of the National Arts Centre Award include Paul Gross, *The Tragically Hip*, Richard Bradshaw, k.d. lang, Rick Mercer, Marie Chouinard, Angela Hewitt, *La La La Human Steps* and its artistic director Edouard Lock, Cirque du Soleil, Mario Bernardi, Denis Marleau, Karen Kain, Jon Kimura Parker, Ben Heppner, Robert Lepage, Michel Marc Bouchard and *Les Deux Mondes*, and Gilles Maheu and *CARBONE 14*.

The NAC Award recipient is chosen annually by a jury of National Art Centre program executives. The recipient of the award receives a cash prize of \$25,000, an original work of art by Quebec-based artist Paula Murray, and a commemorative medallion struck by the Royal Canadian Mint.

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